

Lady Bracknell. He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made it up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, may I ask, Mr. Worthing, who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

Jack. That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward.

[Lady Bracknell bows coldly to Cecily.]

Algernon. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. I beg your pardon?

Cecily. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. *[With a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down.]* I do not know whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, but the number of engagements that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary inquiry on my part would not be out of place. Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? I merely desire information. Until yesterday I had no idea that there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus.

[Jack looks perfectly fitrious, but restrains himself.]

Jack [In a clear, cold voice.]* Miss Cardew is the grand daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park^ Dorking, Surrey; and The Sporrin, Fifeshire, N.B.

Lady Bracknell. That sounds not unsatisfactory. Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. But what proof have I of their authenticity?

Jack. I have carefully preserved the Court Guides of the period. They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. *[Grimly.]* I have known strange errors in the publication.

Jack. Miss Cardew's family solicitors are Messrs. Markfoy, Markby, and Markby.

J&dy Bracknell. Markby, Markby, and Markby? A firm of the very highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Mr. Markby's is occasionally to be seen at dinner-parties. So far I am satisfied.